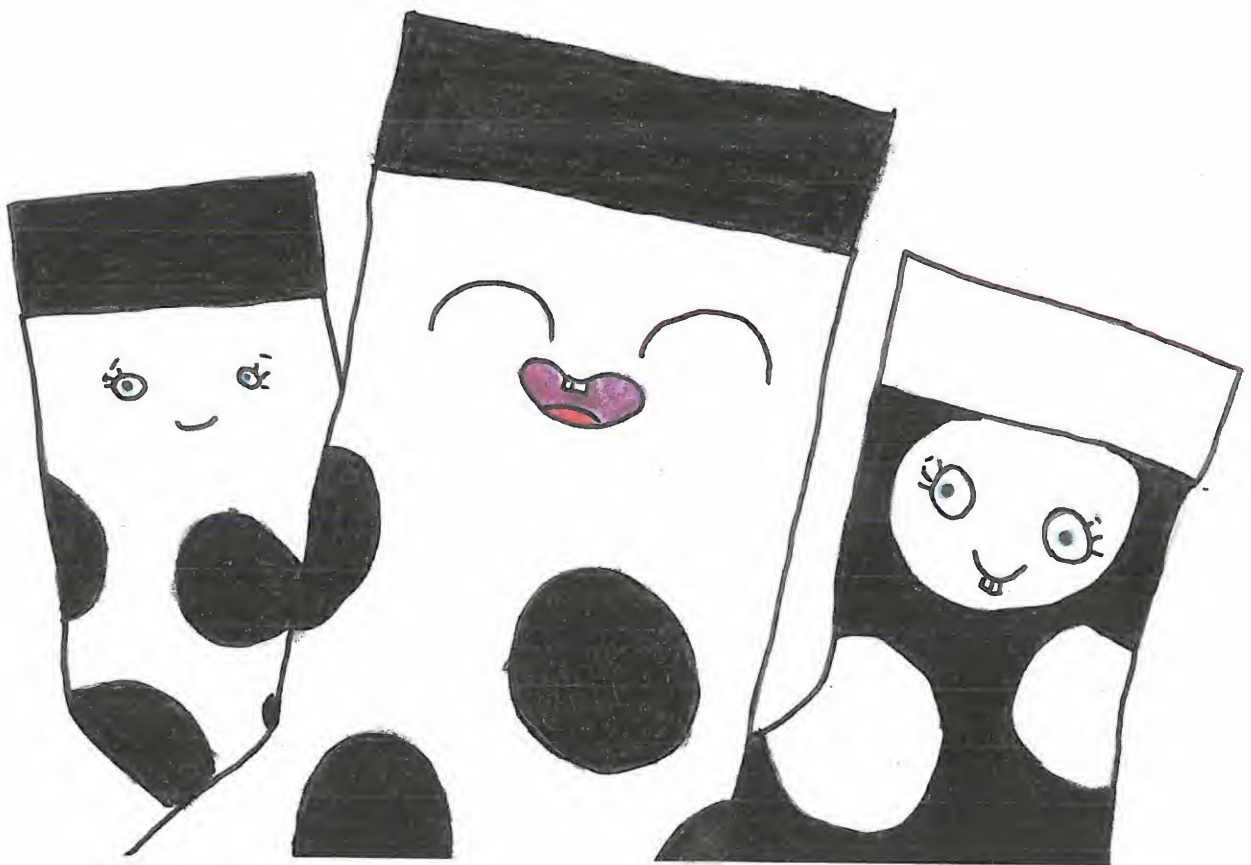
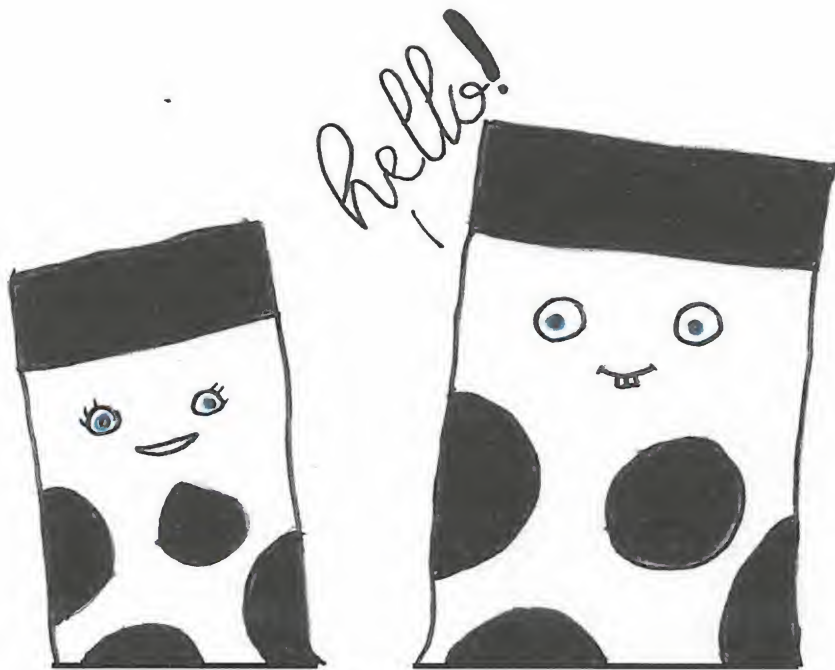


# Don't Judge a sock by its color

By: Elliot Jackson





I'm Fred. This is my best friend Julie. We live in the sock drawer. We love each other because we are just alike. After all, best friends have to be alike, right?

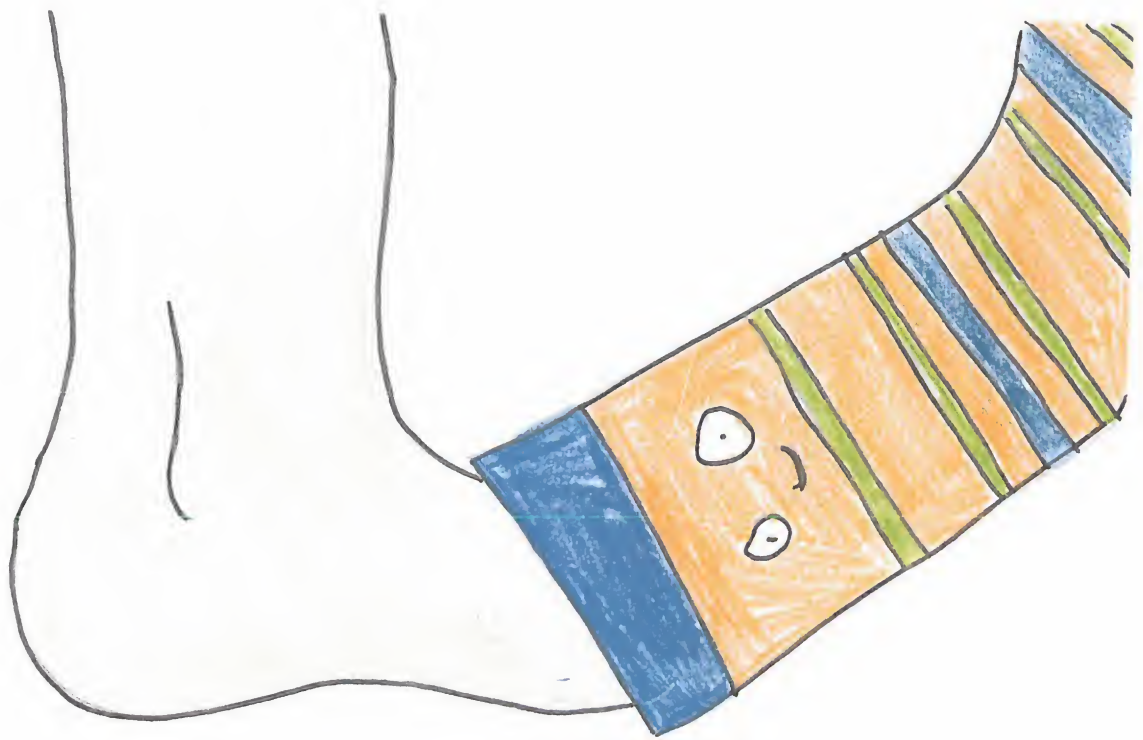
We are both white with black spots and have the same color headband, and we love to swim, tell jokes and hug.



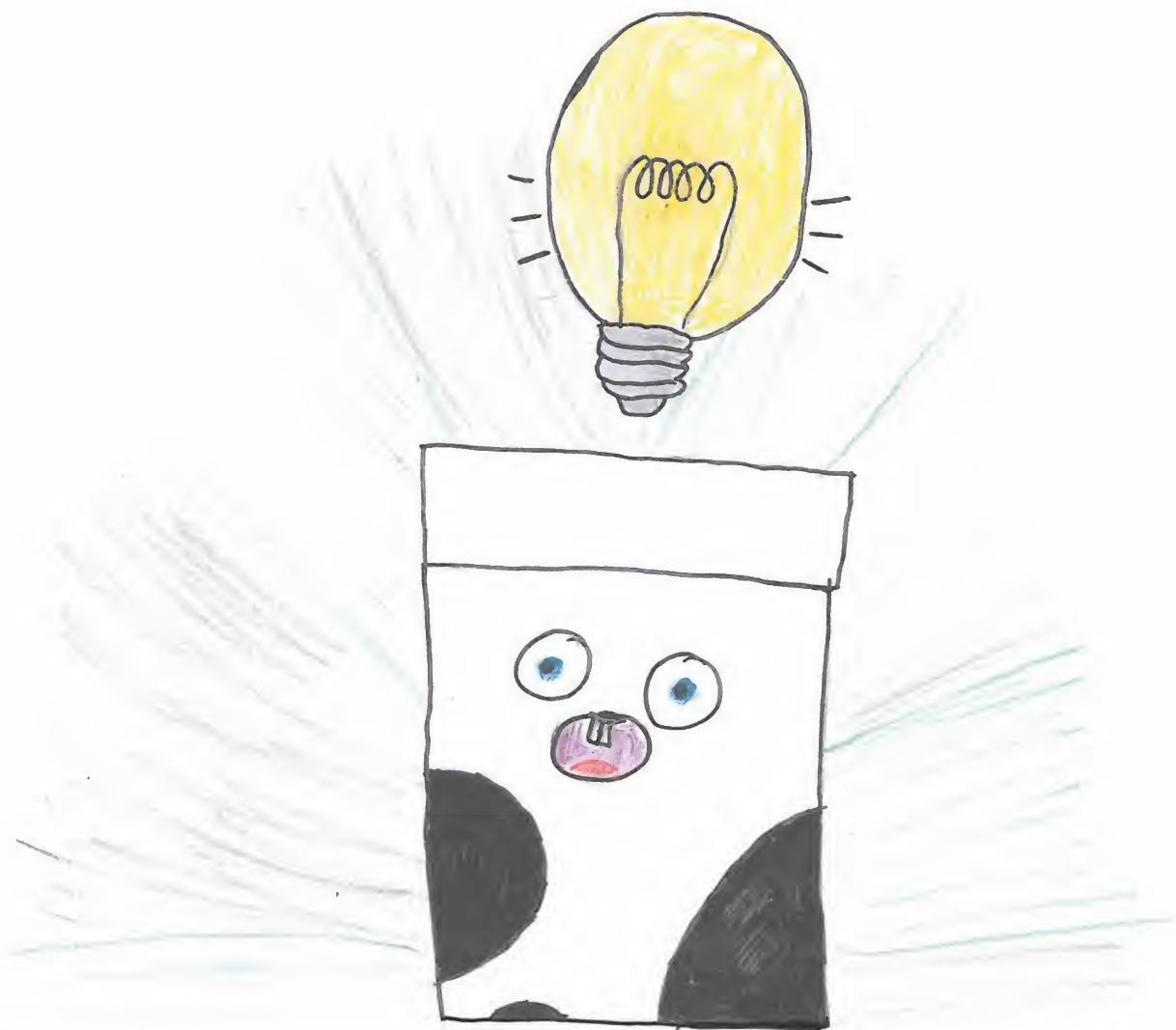
One day, we went swimming in the big, sudsy whirlpool. We were having the best time sloshing around in the bubbles, but, suddenly, Julie was gone!

I wasn't particularly worried though because Julie likes to hide, and we are always reunited after we tumble in the cyclone inferno, but, this time was different. Julie never came back.





My life changed immediately. Without my match, I was never worn again, and I was slowly pushed further and further to the back of the drawer. Perhaps the worst part was that the other socks stopped talking to me. I felt sad.

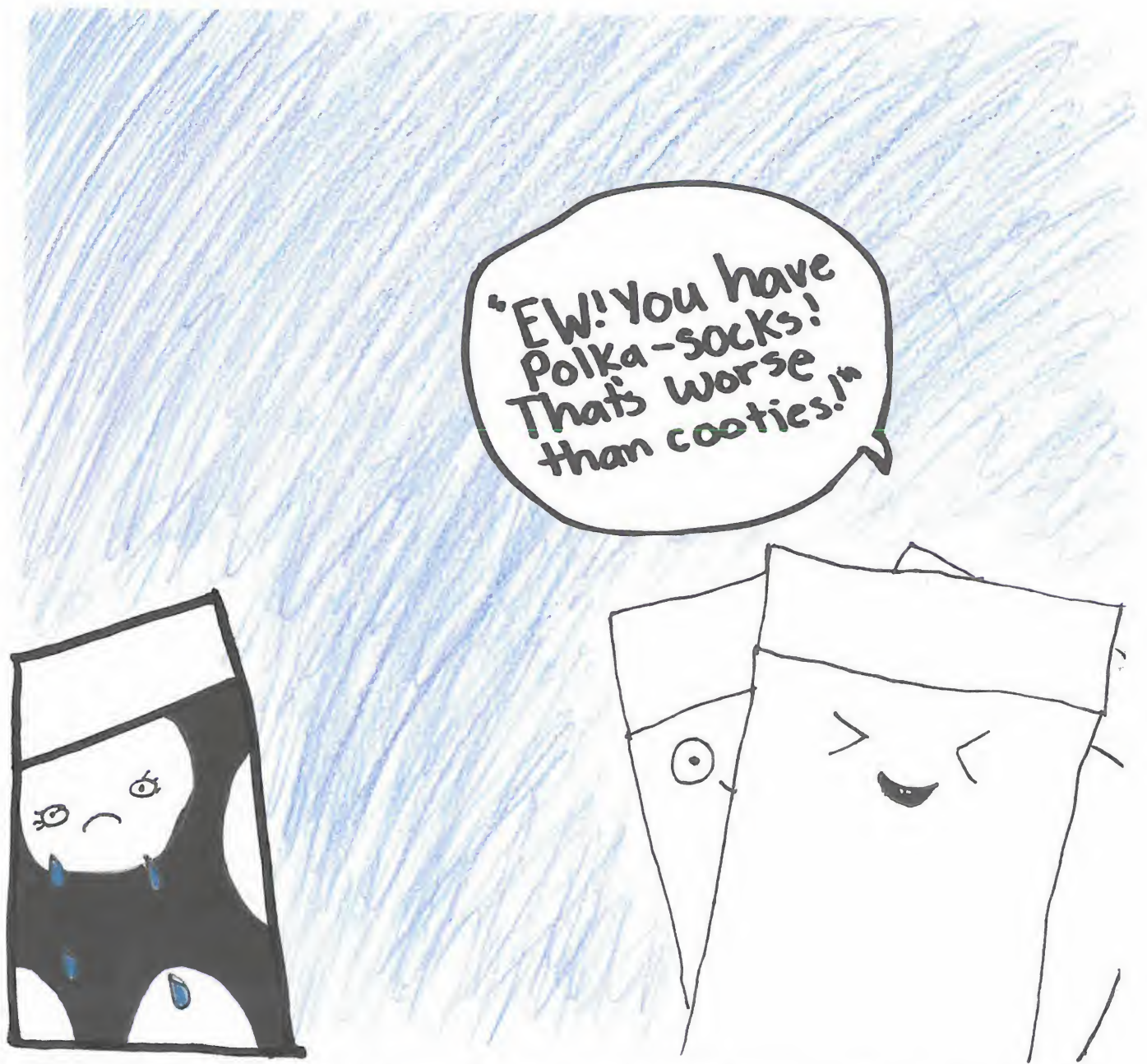


Then, I had an idea! There were lots of socks at the back of the drawer, so I would find other single socks and become friends with them!

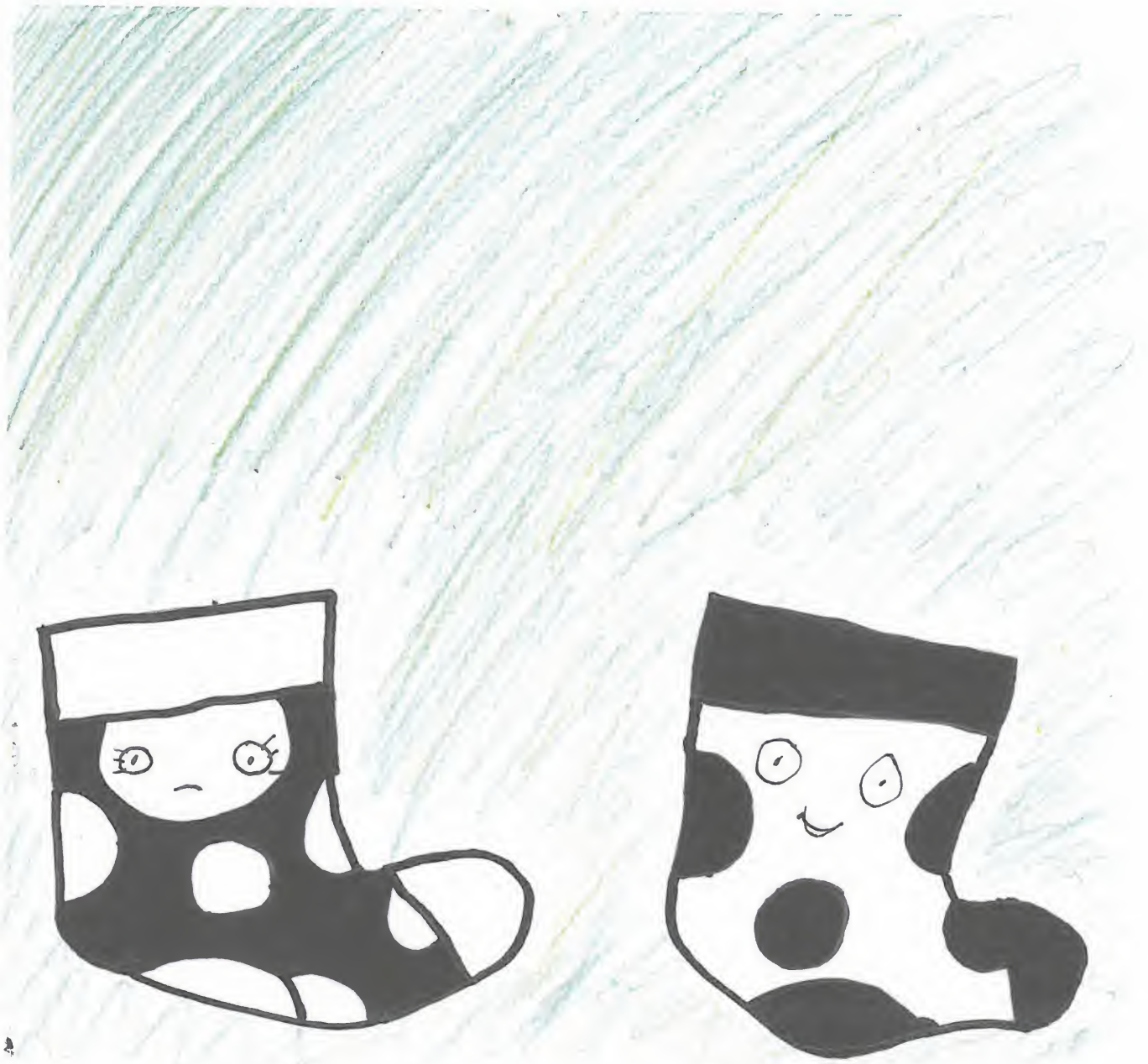


I found several single socks, but none of them liked me because I didn't look like them. I decided to hide my colors so they would like me. That's when I met Serena. She was black with white polka dots. So, I cleverly turned myself inside out and...BAM! I looked just like her. I introduced myself as Ned, and we became fast friends. I was happy to have a friend, but Serena didn't like to swim, tell jokes or hug, and I quickly got tired of pretending to be someone else. I decided to show her my true colors, but, as soon as I did, she didn't like me anymore. So, I crawled to the back of the drawer and spent my days alone.



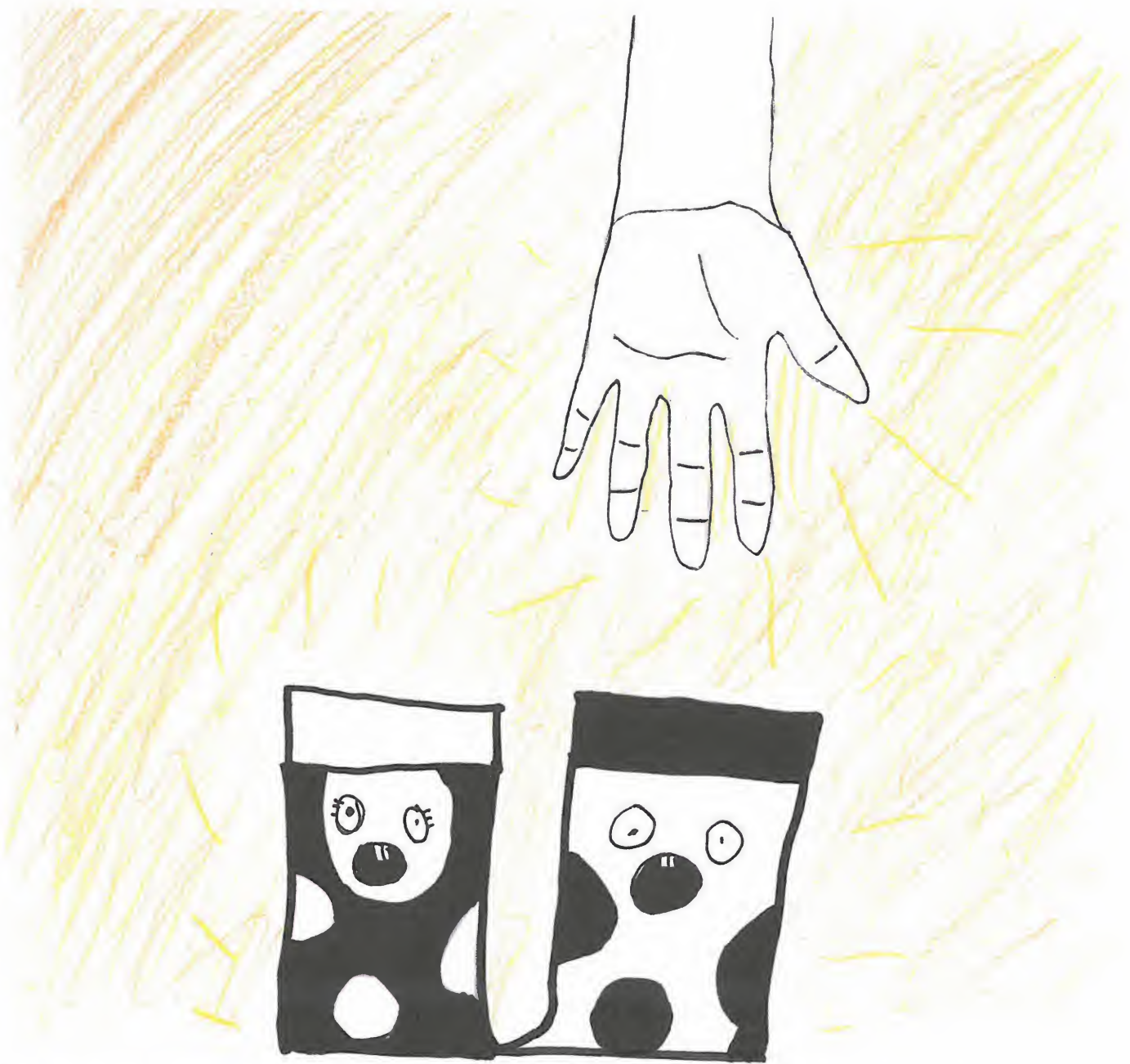


One day, I saw the White Socks bullying Serena. They think that they are the best because they're so white and so clean. Serena began to cry, and I felt flabbergasted that they thought it was okay to be so rude. I marched over to them and said, "Leave her alone. Her spots are beautiful. You may look clean on the outside, but your insides are smellier than any sock I know."



Serena realized that I was right: it doesn't matter if I look like her as long as I'm nice. Serena and I walked away and sat down. "I'm sorry that I thought we couldn't be friends because we look different," Serena said. "I really would like to be friends with you."





"I would love...", I started to say, but, before I could finish, a big hand grabbed us both and threw us into a new drawer.



I fell into another sock, and, when I turned around, I realized it was Julie! "Oh my gosh!" Julie said. "Where have you been? I've been looking for you forever! Come and meet my new friends!"

I looked up and saw that we were surrounded by a whole bunch of friendly-looking socks. I looked at them and realized that none of them matched! I turned to Serena, who was grinning, and said, "Hey Serena, this place feels like home."